

REMARKS

Claim 26 complies with the written description requirement, because the claim, including the phrase, "stand at room temperature for an interval of time," is supported throughout the specification. For example, on page 5, the specification explains transport into the cooling zone 8 and the quenching of the sheet bar 1 there take place within relatively short time intervals, while the remaining cooling to room temperature can take place in the intermediate storage 9.

The amendments to claim 26 do not add new matter. The phrase "causing an increase in layer thickness" has been deleted, rendering the indefiniteness rejection moot. A second austenization temperature has been specified as greater than or equal to 850°C. This second austenization temperature finds support in Figure 3, as well as on page 2, which explains Austenitization is done at temperatures above approximately 720°C.

New claim 33 does not add new matter; the claim finds support in the first paragraph on page 2 of the specification.

As discussed herein, the claim amendments put the application in clear condition for allowance, therefore, applicant respectfully requests that they be entered and considered.

The Office action acknowledges U.S. 2,992,148 to Yeo et al does not relate to an alloy steel coated with aluminum. The Office action, therefore, relies on U.S. 2004/0009366 A1 to Takagi et al, which describes an aluminum-coated structural member including an Al-Si-Fe alloy layer formed on a steel substrate layer. Paragraph [0028] of Takagi et al teaches, starting a forming operation at a temperature higher than 800°C is not desirable because reheating is required and oxidation of the coating is promoted. Because of this teaching, a person having ordinary skill in the art would not have combined Yeo et al and Takagi et al to arrive at the present invention. The present invention requires heating a cooled, heat treated blank a second time to an austenization temperature greater than or equal to 850°C, and forming said blank while heated to produce said component. Smithells Metals Reference Book is cited merely to support the assertion that forming metals is known to a person having ordinary skill in the metallurgical arts, and is not cited to compensate for this issue.

Claims 30 and 31 are separately rejected, but depend from claim 26. The additional references were not cited to compensate for the above-mentioned issue.

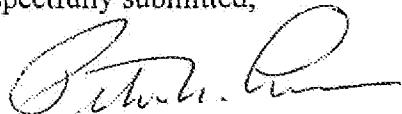
Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees filed, asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account 14-1437. Please credit any excess fees to such account.

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Date: September 23, 2009

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